

**STAFF MEETING MINUTES  
LANCASTER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
COUNTY-CITY BUILDING  
MEETING ROOM #113  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 1999  
9:30 A.M.**

Commissioners Present: Kathy Campbell, Chair  
Larry Hudkins  
Linda Steinman  
Bob Workman  
Bernie Heier

Others Present: Kerry Eagan, Chief Administrative Officer  
Dave Kroeker, Budget & Fiscal Officer  
Gary Lacey, County Attorney  
Diane Staab, Deputy County Attorney  
Don Killeen, County Property Manager  
Dennis Banks, Attention Center Director  
Michelle Schindler, Attention Center Deputy Director  
Greg Pettibone, Project Manager for the New Juvenile  
Detention Facility  
James Jones, Youth Violence Alternative "Victims First"  
Director  
Suzanne Cain, Region V  
Jim Hille, Sinclair Hille & Associates Inc.  
Mark Huettnner, Sinclair Hille & Associates Inc.  
Gwen Thorpe, Deputy County Clerk  
Ann Taylor, County Clerk's Office

**AGENDA ITEM**

**1 APPROVAL OF STAFF MEETING MINUTES OF JANUARY 28, 1999**

**MOTION:** Heier moved and Hudkins seconded approval of the minutes.

The following corrections were noted:

Page 9, Item 9, Paragraph 5

Change to read as follows:

Mike DeKalb, Planning Department, reported on action taken by the Planning Commission with regards to the following:

- \* Change of Zone 181, 98<sup>th</sup> & Raymond Road, Recommendation of Denial from the Planning Commission

- \* Change of Zone 182, Southwest 27<sup>th</sup> & Rokeby Road, Recommendation of Conditional Approval from the Planning Commission

DeKalb indicated these two proposals seemed to be very similar.

Page 11, Item 12a, Paragraph 2

A County Board Staff Meeting will be held at 11:30 a.m. on Tuesday, February 9<sup>th</sup> instead.

**ON CALL:** Hudkins, Heier, Workman, Steinman and Campbell voted aye. Motion carried.

## **2 SITE SELECTION UPDATE**

Jim Hille, Sinclair Hille & Associates Inc., distributed copies of a site diagram contained in the Lancaster County Comprehensive Juvenile Justice System Study - Phase II document (Exhibit A), noting revisions on the following:

- \* Schematic Design - Lancaster County Juvenile Detention Facility  
  
Design provides for Housing Pods, Staff Secure, Intake, Assessment, Entry, Administration, Resident Programs and Services and Expansion areas.
- \* Schematic Design - Detention Housing Pod  
  
Three pods housing 20 youth each. Each includes an outdoor recreation area.
- \* Schematic Design - Staff Secure Housing Pod  
  
Flexibility in design for conversion to secure housing. Twelve beds located on one side, eight on the other to allow for grouping of population.
- \* Schematic Design - Resident Programs and Services  
  
Includes four classrooms grouped around a resource area. An enclosed courtyard has been removed from the design in response to space and budget concerns.
- \* Schematic Design - Administration/Intake  
  
Entrance to serve all components of facility.
- \* Schematic Design - Site Plan
- \* Design located resident population areas away from public side to avoid visual identification as a detention facility.

Hille displayed a map of Potential Juvenile Detention Facility Sites - Dairy Drive West of 14<sup>th</sup> Street, indicating those areas which the State of Nebraska has indicated an interest in selling.

He recommended purchasing additional property to the north and west to allow for future expansion and on-site location of the Juvenile Court.

The Board concurred with Hille's recommendation and requested him to block-out space, without specific detail, in the design for further expansion.

Hille reported the issue of whether the County can tap into the State's heating and cooling system for the Juvenile Detention Facility is still being explored.

Heier inquired whether a radio tower, located north of the site, would interfere with communications equipment.

Hille agreed to research the issue and will report on his findings and the final schematic design at the March 2<sup>nd</sup> Assessment Center Team meeting, which will be held at 9:30 a.m.

Hille and Eagan agreed to conduct further negotiations with Harold Clarke, Department of Corrections Director, with regards to the site.

### **3 ASSESSMENT CENTER & ALTERNATIVES TO INCARCERATION**

#### **Alternatives to Secure Detention**

Dave Kroeker, Budget & Fiscal Officer, reviewed budget figures for Lancaster County Juvenile Programs Alternatives to Secure Detention (Exhibit B), noting the budget for Juvenile Court Boarding Contracts appears insufficient. He indicated that operating costs will increase by approximately 2 million dollars when the new Juvenile Detention Facility is built.

Kit Boesch, Human Services Director, briefly reviewed Alternatives Currently in the Community (Exhibit B), noting a balance of \$195,634 in funds committed to alternative programs.

Boesch also reported on additional prevention and intervention options (Exhibit B), noting the following recommendations:

- 1) If Nebraska Crime Commission funds are received - proceed to implement programs immediately
- 2) Ask the Prevention Policy Board to give the County four specific, effective, affordable prevention programs which address meeting the needs of all youth - but especially Hispanic and African American youth
- 3) Ask the Juvenile Justice Review Committee to identify two additional alternatives that would:
  - a. Address a higher-at-risk youth, but one who still should not be in the correctional system
  - b. Address our disproportionate minority youth count
  - c. Be able to handle at least ten youth at a time

Campbell requested that an indication of which recommendations were included in the Lancaster County Comprehensive Juvenile Justice System Study - Phase II report be provided.

Heier noted that one of the recommendations in that report was to improve data and reporting procedures, which is critical to the process.

### **Develop Levels of Custody**

Boesch briefly reported on an article that addresses levels of custody and residential program models (Exhibit B). She suggested formation of a committee to develop a levels of custody tool to assist the judiciary and probation officers in making placement decisions.

Board consensus to authorize Boesch to draft a letter from the Board convening such a committee. One member of the judiciary is requested to serve on the committee for the duration of the process.

### **Mental Health Subcommittee**

Boesch reported that the Mental Health Subcommittee is conducting an in-depth assessment of the mobile crisis unit concept, noting that crisis beds and respite care are considered critical components.

Boesch recommended authorizing the subcommittee to proceed with development of a mobile crisis unit and determination of costs.

In response to a question from Campbell, Suzanne Cain, Region V, indicated that funding of the Assessment Center and a mobile crisis unit will be a joint decision, with grant funds contributing to those costs. She noted that short term and long term functions of the mobile crisis unit will need to be determined before budget decisions can be made.

Board consensus that development of the Assessment Center, an assessment instrument and the mobile crisis unit should not be delayed until the new Juvenile Detention Facility is constructed.

The Board requested that the Mental Health Subcommittee report on development of these components, as well as users' acceptance and budget projections, be available at the April meeting of the Assessment Center Team.

### **Risk Assessment Tools/Assessment Center Process**

Boesch briefly reported on an evaluation of available risk assessment tools (Exhibit B) that was conducted with Dr. Mike Epstein, University of Nebraska Department of Special Education, noting the following recommendations:

- 1) To initially adopt the Broward Screening Tool and the Problem Oriented Screening Instrument for Teenagers (POSIT) for use in Lancaster County for the next twelve months
- 2) To put out a Request for Proposals (RPF) for an organization to operate the Assessment Center, initially using the screening tool from Broward and the POSIT assessment tool with Lancaster County Youth

- 3) To ask, in the RFP, how they would propose to operate the Assessment Center (staffing, day-to-day operations, etc.) and estimate a cost for the County to consider

Boesch noted that additional questions could be added to the POSIT assessment tool to make it more effective or the County could elect to develop its own assessment tool.

Brief discussion took place with the following concerns noted:

- \* Results of a self-reporting assessment tool can be skewed if inaccurate information is provided
- \* Computer data detailing youth history may be inaccurate or incompatible with other systems
- \* Information regarding mental health is restricted, making assessment difficult
- \* Whether the screening tool will incorporate detention screen criteria
- \* Whether the Juvenile Court Judges will agree to the Assessment Center concept
- \* How a non-profit organization can operate the Assessment Center when it is a State mandated responsibility of the Juvenile Court to make decisions regarding custody

The Board requested that Bernie Heier, County Board; Linda Steinman, County Board; Kerry Eagan, Chief Administrative Officer; and Kit Boesch, Human Services Director, meet with Dennis Banks, Attention Center Director; Linda Porter, Deputy County Attorney in the Juvenile Division; Margene Timm, Deputy Public Defender in the Juvenile Division; Juvenile Court Judge Toni Thorson; and Juvenile Court Judge Tom Dawson to discuss who will run the Assessment Center, screening tools, and levels of custody and to request that Juvenile Court Judges Thorson and Dawson serve on the Assessment Instrument Review Committee.

A report on this meeting will be given at the April Attention Center Team meeting.

The Board also requested Boesch to contact the Juvenile Detention Facility in Des Moines, Iowa and seek information on how their facility resolved the question of who assumes responsibility for making custody decisions.

Board consensus to schedule additional discussion of the Assessment Center on the agenda for the March 2<sup>nd</sup> Assessment Center Team meeting.

Board consensus to proceed with the following recommendations:

- 1) If Nebraska Crime Commission funds are received - proceed to implement programs immediately
- 2) Ask the Prevention Policy Board to give the County four specific, effective, affordable prevention programs which address meeting the needs of all youth - but especially Hispanic and African American youth
- 3) Ask the Juvenile Justice Review Committee to identify two additional alternatives that would:
  - a. Address a higher-at-risk youth, but one who still should not be in the correctional system
  - b. Address our disproportionate minority youth count

- c. Be able to handle at least ten youth at a time
- 4) To request a review of the Broward Screening Tool and the Problem Oriented Screening Instrument for Teenagers (POSIT) for use in Lancaster County for the next twelve months and ask for recommendations on data entry and uniformity

The Board requested that the Restorative Justice Council proposal to develop a victim-offender mediation program in Lancaster County be included in the Juvenile Justice Review Committee's review of alternative programs.

The Board also requested that recommendations from the Prevention Policy Board and Juvenile Justice Review Committee (Recommendations 2 and 3) be reported at the April meeting of the Attention Center Team.

#### **4 DISCUSSION OF BOARD MEMBER MEETINGS**

- a. Register of Deeds Technology Committee - Hudkins, Heier

Hudkins reported that the Register of Deeds' new data base system will be operational by March 1, 1999, noting that the current AS400 data base system will be used as a back-up for remote access.

- b. Ecological Advisory Committee Strategic Planning Retreat - Heier

Heier reported that discussion focused on the following:

- \* Vision
- \* Mission Statement
- \* Principals

- c. Ecological Advisory Committee - Heier

Heier reported that items discussed at the Ecological Advisory Committee Strategic Planning Retreat were reviewed.

- d. Master Plan Steering Committee - Hudkins

Hudkins reported that Steve Flanders, Project Manager, will review a request from the County Clerk's Office for a front office counter and enclosure of office space and will report back to Eagan.

#### **6 EMERGENCY ITEMS & OTHER BUSINESS**

Campbell requested that Board members provide her a list of their preferences for committee assignments prior to the Mid-Year Budget Retreat.

## **7 ADJOURNMENT**

By direction of the Chair, the meeting was adjourned.

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Bruce Medcalf  
Lancaster County Clerk